

CLAIMS

1. A non-invasive external control for facilitating the insertion and removal of an endoscope into a body cavity comprising:

5 an annular tube having an outer and inner surface with the inner diameter of the tube sized to permit sliding passage therethrough of the insertion end of an endoscope tube,

said annular tube having means for coating the endoscope tube as it passes through the annular tube with a lubricant.

10 2. A control as set forth in claim 1, having an annular flange extending outwardly from the outer surface of the annular tube closer to the proximal than distal end thereof.

15 3. A control as set forth in claim 1, wherein said coating means comprises a compressible foam member impregnated with a lubricant positioned to engage an endoscope tube as it moves through the control.

20 4. A control as set forth in claim 3, wherein the foam member comprises an annular tube at least partially positioned at one end within the annular tube and having an inner uncompressed diameter substantially equal to the outer diameter of an endoscope tube intended to be controlled.

25 5. A control as set forth in claim 4, having a flange extending outwardly from the annular tube close to the proximal end thereof.

6. A control as set forth in claim 5, wherein the diameter of the annular flange is sized to preclude insertion of the control into the body cavity of a patient.

30 7. A control as set forth in claim 6, having a second flange extending outwardly from the outer surface of the annular tube near the distal end thereof.

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8. A control as set forth in claim 7, wherein the distance between the first and second flanges provide a sufficient length along the annular tube for hand-gripping.

9. A control as set forth in claim 3, having an annular flange extending outwardly from the outer surface of the annular tube, said annular flange having a passage extending radially from the inner surface of said annular tube outwardly through the annular flange, said passage for feeding a lubricant into the interior of the annular tube.

10. A control as set forth in claim 9, wherein said passage extending radially to the outer periphery of said annular flange.

11. A control as set forth in claim 9, having a second annular flange extending radially from the annular tube near the distal end thereof.

12. A control as set forth in claim 9, wherein the compressible foam member comprises an annular tube having a major portion of its length coaxial and coextensive with at least a portion of said annular tube.

13. A method of inserting, and removing controlling endoscope into a body cavity comprising:

threading the leading end of an endoscope through a tubular member having a quantity of lubricant positioned thereon to coat the leading end of the endoscope with the lubricant immediately before insertion of the endoscope, and inserting the endoscope into a body cavity and thereafter at least partially directing the endoscope as it moves into the body cavity by manual control of the tubular member with the tubular member entirely external of the body cavity.

14. A control as set forth in claim 12, wherein the foam annular tube is positioned interior the annular tube.

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15. A control as set forth in claim 3 wherein the control has means for opening the control along its length.

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